

**WILLIAM A. LITTLE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**  
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**INTERVIEWERS:** WILLIAM LITTLE

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[00:00:00] WILLIAM: What was your involvement in the CAA [sic] struggle, I mean to start from the beginning, in terms of the role you played and what occurred?

[00:00:17] LARRY: You mean the Central Area Contractors Association [sic]?

[00:00:22] WILLIAM: Let's start about 1969.

[00:00:27] LARRY: My first contact with the Central Area Contractors Association was in 1969, I believe around the winter, when some Black construction workers called a meeting in the Central Area to discuss the problems that they'd been faced with, i.e., systematic denial of employment opportunities and contracts in the construction industry. I and some other Black activists attended that meeting, and the information that we received was really, you know, it didn't surprise us but it was stunning in the overt racism that had been manifested through the construction industry. They talked about the fact that less than 1% of the electricians, plumbers, iron workers were Black, and that we had several brothers in the Seattle area who had experience in all the different construction fields. We also had brothers who could handle small contracts. And nobody was getting any action.

It was particularly deplorable when they outlined all the construction that was being done in the Central Area, and surrounding neighborhoods in our community that was being paid for with federal and state dollars. And they pointed out how again, that less than .05% of all the workers were Black. And it was decided that we shouldn't allow this outrage to continue right in our community, when we had so many brothers who were unemployed who were capable of handling the jobs. I mean, it's just a simple fact of racism.

So they ran down to us—it was Tyree Scott and some other brothers—ran down to us how they had been meeting with the contractors, they had been meeting with representatives of the federal government, so affirmative action programs, I guess EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission] and other agencies; and that they hadn't gotten any type of action. They'd gone through all the peaceful means there were to address their grievances: that is, to get jobs and small contracts so they could survive.

So they said that they had a plan to go into some action. The first action was to close down some job sites. A particular concern was the one at—they were building a gym—no, excuse me, they were building a swimming pool at 23rd [Avenue] and East Jefferson [Street] right in the heart of the Central Area, and all the workers had been Black. And we talked about, also the social factor, that Model Cities had come up with this project in order to literally cool off the anger and frustration of Black youth who had been out in the streets, rebelling in a spontaneous manner against an oppressive social order. As a result of that, Model Cities was told to come up with something for the Niggers, and what they came up with was a swimming pool to cool off the youth. The swimming pool, although a community needs a swimming pool, it didn't address the basic human problems that people in this community were facing like jobs, education, and the right to control our own destiny, and especially the right to have employment in our community. They're not going to build it and not use us as workers. People were really angry, mad over that. So we said that would be a target. And Harborview Hospital, that's primarily accountable to the poor, building a major wing and not utilizing any Black or Third World workers. So my beginning with them was going to those initial meetings, and then helping them to organize for first initial job closures.

[00:05:19] WILLIAM: That's at Garfield High School?

[00:05:21] LARRY: Right. Medgar Evers Swimming Pool.

[00:05:23] WILLIAM: Okay, what was your role in helping them organize? What did you provide them with? What kind of skills, or what kind of strategies?

[00:05:31] LARRY: At that particular time, I had been active a few years in Seattle, and my primary constituency were students on the high school and college level: University of Washington, Garfield, I was teaching at a school called Soul Academy at that time, which was a school for brothers and sisters who had been

pushed out of the regular public school system. So, I ran down the issues to the youth, both in the high school level and the college level. I showed them how—I explained to them how the brothers were being systematically denied jobs in the construction industry, that these were highly skilled jobs, that these were some of the best paying jobs that workers could have, and that I know that some of them, when they got out, they would want to have the opportunity to be construction workers, especially in the light of the fact that it pays very well, and they'd be able to take care of their kids. And we didn't want them to go through learning how to be an electrician, or a plumber, or a carpenter, and just because they were Black, not being able to cop a gig, get a job. And so I related it to their experience, and many of them became immediately interested. They said, “that’s definitely outrageous, and we definitely would be down for doing something about it.”

So, when the first demonstrations were called, we had several brothers, especially, and a few sisters from the University of Washington Black Student Union, and we had some youths who skipped school at Garfield, Franklin, Soul Academy, and Meany Junior High School and came out to demonstrate. And they understood, they knew what the issues were. Their brothers in the CAC [sic] explained to them what was going on, what the problem was, and that we were going to use any means at our disposal to assure that Black construction workers and contractors received their just share of the work.

So, my job was to organize the youth, and get them out there, and explain to them what the consequences of our involvement would be. I also took it upon myself to learn as much as I could about discrimination in the construction industry, particularly in Seattle, and a little bit about national trends so I could [inaudible] .

[00:08:27] WILLIAM: Okay, how about beyond Garfield, after you [?shutdown?] on Garfield and went to the King County hospital at that time. And what type of strategies, and what was your role in terms of controlling the demonstrators?

[00:08:49] LARRY: Yeah, like CAC [sic] had their own security people that kept the demonstrators in line. They were the ones that made the decision as to what they were going to do. You know, I thought that they were fairly creative in coming up with some actions that were like many urban guerilla actions, and that they would hit one site, and then move to the next, and minimizing the possibility of people getting busted, and at the same time maintaining the pressure on the construction industry and dramatizing the plight of Black workers. That strategy was primarily developed by them, and I just kind of helped out in security keeping the people together. I didn't have much of a say in determining the strategy or implementing it past the extent that I tried to keep the people together.

[00:09:58] WILLIAM: Would it be fair to say that because of your past experience in demonstration, that you did provide some technical assistance in maintaining the viable organization, I mean maintain or control once you got to the site?

[00:10:17] LARRY: Yeah, to a certain extent I helped on that. And you know, I noticed that some of the brothers in the Central Contractors Association would ask me and Carl Miller and some of the other brothers who had been active awhile, about different types of strategy in terms of getting people out and maintaining their interest.

[00:10:48] WILLIAM: Who was Carl Miller, anyway?

[00:10:51] LARRY: Carl Miller was the—he had been the founder and the primary organizer of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Seattle. No, he wasn't the founder, he was the primary organizer between '67 and '68, then he was one of the primary organizers of the Black Student Union at the University of

Washington, and he was one of the initial members of the Black Panther Party. So he was very active during that time, very well-respected.

[00:11:41] WILLIAM: Okay, let's move up further along in time to the June 1 Movement, which was in 1972, I think it started. Let's see...

[00:11:56] LARRY: June 1st Movement?

[00:11:57] WILLIAM: Yeah. What was your role in that series of shutdowns? And some organizations changed at that time, too, the UCWA.

[00:12:09] LARRY: Right. Like before 1972, the end of '69 and '70, there arose certain conflicts within the Central Contractors Association. I mean to me, they seemed to be class conflicts, in that some of the contractors started getting a few contracts as a result of the struggle that had been put forth, and some of them got suspicious of one another. Others were kind of opportunistic, in that their main interests was contracts, they didn't want to be demonstrating no more, unless it was absolutely necessary, or they didn't want to jeopardize their piece of the pie. And they started divisions, provoking situations and conflicts within the organization that tended to weaken it. One was the accusation that Tyree Scott was stealing the money; they had elected him as their first director. He had to start dealing with the members over some money, rather than trying to figure out how we could consolidate our gains and continue the struggle. And it led to four or five of the members being manipulated to the extent that they even jumped on the cat.

[00:13:47] WILLIAM: By who? Who were they manipulated by?

[00:13:51] LARRY: Some of the—I don't know the names—it was some of the key leaders, like they had a Board of Directors of the Central Area Contractors, and like Tyree was their Director. And some of the key members on that board, who I'm not sure specifically what their names were.

They also had to deal with another group at that time headed by Keve Bray, and they had a little paper called the *Afro American Journal* and they would—because they didn't have the leadership in the Central Contractors Association, they were very suspicious of it. So they would put articles in their paper saying that Tyree is opportunist and a couple of other people are opportunists. And they had a cat working with them called the Bomb Crusher who was about 6'8, 278 [pounds], and they would send him around, kind of threatening people physically, trying to threaten people and get them to be more accountable to the people in the *Afro American Journal*. So they had to deal with these community and internal conflicts that led to splits.

After Tyree got beat up, he left at the end of 1970, and started the United Construction Workers Association. He said he wanted to just deal with workers rather than trying to have an organization of workers and contractors. So during '70 and '71, as I understand it—I didn't have that much contact with Tyree—but between those years they were trying to get more programs established, affirmative action type programs established, to ensure that Black construction workers received their fair share of the jobs. Because 1970 there had been a Court Order Advisory Council established that said a certain percentage of Blacks should be accepted into the apprenticeship programs on a year-by-year basis. And they spent a lot of time making sure that law was being followed. But by the time '72 rolled around, there was supposed to be something like 250, 300 brothers in the apprenticeship programs, and there was only about 40, 50 or 60, I don't remember the numbers. There was a clear lack of good faith on the part of the federal government, the Associated General Contractors of the greater Seattle area, and the other powers that be in the construction industry, and that they weren't enforcing the law.

The UCWA had done all they could to get them to enforce it, short of more militant street actions. Toward the end of May of '72, they called another mass community meeting, that a whole lot of brothers and sisters came to. They were using the Filipino Youth Activities Center to have their meetings, and we went up there. Again, I'd gotten a job at the University of Washington as an administrator over the Black Student Division, and my main political work was still amongst Black students, so I was—Tyree called me and said, "You need to come to this meeting," and I came. And he explained to us what the issues were, and they said, "The only way we can dramatize our situation again is to hit the streets. And we want to be even more effective than we were in '69 and '70, and we need your support." So I tried to learn what the issues were and tried to get as many brothers as possible to come out and give their support.

So by the time June—well the first demonstration was on June 1, early in the morning out there in Issaquah, around some construction worker activities that were being done around I-90, and there weren't any brothers out there. So we went out there and closed it down, we opened up the bridge. What we had wanted to do was stall traffic all the way down the street and then fuck up all the construction equipment and have the people line up waiting for the bridge to open to see that we were doing it, and then we could explain to them why it was necessary. But it didn't work out because they got the bridge working before we had even finished, before we had even got out there. But anyway, we had a demonstration out there.

We moved from there to downtown Seattle to close down some major construction work that was being done on some bank. Still the issue then put forth that the courts and the contractors, we were just asking them to enforce the law that they created, and to provide more jobs for brothers. So the issues were fairly clear, and most of the Black community, regardless of class background, generally supported the issue, even though a lot of them didn't get out and demonstrate. Those demonstrations were the first time a new element joined in—

[00:19:44] WILLIAM: What element?

[00:19:46] LARRY: Other Third World people and progressive whites. In '69, sometime we'd have 50, sometimes we'd have 100, sometimes 250 people, but 90% of them would be Black. But in '72, that composition kind of changed, cause the movement base changed, and the struggle changed in certain ways. There was an effort made to get other people, especially Third World people—Tyree then had built up some relationships between some Chicano activists headed by Roberto Maestas and some Asian activists headed by Nemesio Domingo, Silme Domingo, and some other Asians. And he'd call them after we'd had a few demonstrations—the first demonstration was mostly Black workers and a few Black activists, like myself. And then as we continued to demonstrate, other people found out—I don't know if Chicanos and Asians offered it, or Tyree sought them out, I'm not really clear. But they started joining the demonstrations in large numbers, like a couple of dozen of them.

By the time that we got to Seattle Community College, there were maybe a dozen Chicanos, a dozen Asians, and a dozen whites, the rest Black, involved in our demonstrations, because they saw it as a worker's struggle and they wanted to lend their support, and they were welcomed. And they tended—they generally at first supported the UCWA leadership. So all these forces got involved, and we broadened our base of support. But it caused other organizational and political problems because there had been—UCWA hadn't done that much work in terms of ideological development, you dig? In terms of—is this a nationalist struggle, is this a workers struggle, is our orientation—do we see our struggle as both a race and a class problem? If so, how should this be manifested through our strategies? What forces in the community should we try to get involved, and how should we direct our demonstrations? These questions really hadn't been dealt with, so as a result of these new forces

joining, some people, especially some of the more sectarian white radicals, had their own definition of how a workers struggle should be organized, and what the principles of unity ought to be, and what direction it ought to be going. They started putting forth their ideas, some of which were legitimate, others were kind of arrogant and chauvinistic, and caused some conflicts, it caused some brothers within the UCWA not to understand and even to drop out, not that many, but the main core continued.

By the end of those demonstrations, dozens and dozens of people went to jail. At one time at Seattle Community College, fifty-two people went to jail. So a new factor entered into the situation: We had to start dealing with the courts, people going to arraignment, people going to trial. So they had big meetings. For some of the Chicanos, some of the Asians, some of the whites, it was the first time they had ever been to jail, so they wanted to know how best to deal with that: what was the attitude, what was the ideas, what was the lines that we were going to put forth in the courts.

So UCWA was forced to have to deal with that, as well as look at demonstrations and continue to meet with the people, with the Court Order Advisory Council, with the Associated General Contractors, people from the Office of Civil Rights of the federal government, et cetera. The mayor's office got into it, because one day Seattle Community College was torn up, several thousand dollars of blitzkrieg type charge, almost everybody got away, maybe ten people got arrested. The mayor said, "We can't tolerate or condone these type of activities in our city." So he got involved. The leadership of the UCWA was having to deal with all these forces.

At the end, after the demonstrations stopped, they got some commitments from the Court Order Advisory Council that they would do what they said they were going to do. The excuses were that the economy had changed from '69 and '70, and there wasn't that much opportunity to integrate more workers into the workforce. But they weren't making any allowances, they weren't giving Blacks any type of preferential treatment based on historic and systematic discrimination. So, if there were jobs available, it was still done on a seniority basis. Only if there were extra jobs were they allowing Black construction workers to enter. As a result of those struggles, the UCWA really appreciated especially the support they got from all the people, and as a result of that—

[00:25:24] WILLIAM: What people?

[00:25:26] LARRY: The Chicanos, Asians, and whites. And they started to look at broadening their demands, because still, the demands then, even though they got support from all those other elements, the demand was to allow Black construction workers or apprentices into the construction industry. They didn't say Third World, you dig? They didn't say Third world men and women, it just said Black. So they wanted to figure out a way to include Chicano and Asian workers, that's when they first started talking about including Chicanos, Asians, Native American workers in the agreement. And they started putting forth that position, at some of the meetings toward the end of the summer of '72.

Also as a result of that, a broader coalition made up of UCWA, Chicanos, Asians and progressive whites was developed. And we called that structure the June 1st Movement. The purpose of it was to continue working together around struggles that affected us all, not necessarily just to work on the UCWA struggle, but to work on struggles that affected all of us. So people started coming together and we started defining the nature of our organization. And some very serious problems developed as a result, I means in terms of whether or not we were going to be an anti-imperialist organization, or are we going to be an organization that just deals with popular struggles that develop in the Third World community, or are we just going to deal with worker's struggles—what was going to be the nature of the June 1st Movement? And some conflicts developed.

At that time Harley Bird, a key organizer in the UCWA, was running for 37th District Representative on the Republican ticket, and especially some of the progressive whites started questioning, "We put forth a righteous workers struggle, and then one of the key people—" Well, some other people questioned it too, some of the Blacks that were involved—I don't want to give that impression—also questioned him running on the Republic ticket. At the time we had just put forth the righteous workers struggle, and he had asked for the support of Governor Evans and other people who we'd been struggling against, who we saw as our enemies. So people started questioning that, and Harley dropped out. And then Tyree, Todd [Hawkins], Michael Ross, and other people, all of them eventually dropped out of the June 1st Movement, because they felt that especially some of the whites were being sectarian, they were putting forth a line that they didn't understand nor did they agree with at that time, that they felt at that particular time that the electoral system, running a person for 37th District Representative was something that could increase the effectiveness of the work that UCWA had to do by having a person in the State Legislature.

And at that particular time, they didn't agree with some of the lines that were being pushed the hardest within the June 1st Movement. They were enthusiastic about it in the beginning, they came to its first meeting, but they eventually stopped coming. And eventually the June 1st Movement didn't survive. I stayed with it to the end, but it broke up over some problem of sectarianism. We had groups like the Revolutionary Union who wanted to put forth a very narrow position, and it caused a lot of division, and it eventually dissolved itself in kind of a natural way.

[00:30:02] WILLIAM: Okay, let's talk about the third one. Let's talk about the demonstration in 1974, the series of demonstrations in 1974.

[00:30:14] LARRY: '74 or '75, starting in December, ending in February of '75. It seems like demonstrations that have been initiated by the United Construction [Workers Association have been cyclical in the sense] that some glaring instances of racial discrimination in the construction industry came to light. Activities were developed to address—actions were developed to address those grievances, and to get more Black workers integrated into the construction industry, this is what happened in '69. Then, the agreements, the proposals were changed, were not adhered to, were not implemented. Certain glaring instances of brothers going out to get jobs were attacked, and as a result, community meetings were called, more immediate examples with past instances of discrimination were talked about, action was developed, especially in the form of demonstrations against the construction industry, with the idea that if we can't work, no one should be able to work. Agreements, proposals were changed, and improvement of the representation of Black workers at all levels of the construction industry were developed. Again, good-faith agreements were made, they were broken, always by the powers that be in the construction industry and the federal government, coming up with excuses why they can't implement a proposal that they had agreed upon. And then, the Black workers being forced in the situation that the only way they can reach or achieve their just demands was to charge the construction industry with racism, and hit the streets again. And that happened in '69, '72, and '74 and '75.

In '74 and '75 the struggle was centered primarily around operating engineers, these were brothers who drive those big trucks, and oilers, that oil the trucks. They had concrete evidence, I mean, they had a committee of operating engineers, these are brothers who had all had experience driving trucks in Vietnam and Seattle, or wherever. And they had a big construction site down here at Rainier Avenue, in the Third World community and nobody was being, no brothers were working down there. They identified twenty people driving trucks, thirty people driving trucks, and not one of them were Third World—Black, Asian, Chicano, or any of them. And this was being done, again, in the Third World community, and they said, "This is outrageous, this is the same shit

we went through in 1969. We have these brothers able and willing to do the work, and can't get in in our own community.”

And so they went down there and tried to get hired. They talked to the cat over at National Construction, and he said, “Well, we weren't able to find any qualified people, we can't hire anybody else now,” and sent them through a lot of jive. And as a result of the Operating Engineers Committee of the UCWA getting completely frustrated, and trying to get some gigs for their members, they called the board of the UCWA together and the staff, and said, “We feel we have to go back out into the streets, like you all did in ‘72 and ‘69, before we can be guaranteed any of these jobs as operating engineers. So again, a community meeting was called, Tyree called a meeting, he called the Chicanos and some of the Asian activists.

And the first demonstration at the Rainier site was all same pattern, it was all UCWA workers, about twelve to fifteen of them. But they weren't all Black, that was a different element, there was a couple of Filipinos, maybe a couple of Asians, and all the rest Black.

[00:35:02] WILLIAM: But all Third World?

[00:35:03] LARRY: Yeah, all Third World workers, all men. Second and third actions against National Construction site, it was more Third World men, but more of us, more activists came in, the Chicano activists from El Centro [de la Raza], I came, I brought about three or four brothers with me, none of whom were construction workers. But we joined the forces in trying—the issue centered around the National Construction site doing work with thirty operating engineers in our community, and not hiring any of our people. So we said that if we can't work, they ought naught to be able to work. So our position was that it should be closed down, the National Construction site should be closed down on Rainier. And that's what we went down there to do, close it down.

The second and third time we went out there, they began to mobilize the police. The second time we were able to close it down, but the third time we weren't. Matter of fact, the third time that we went out there, several of us were arrested.

[00:36:26] WILLIAM: Let me go back again. The first time—

[00:36:27] LARRY: Was in December, around December 13 or 14, nobody got arrested, and they closed down the site.

[00:36:33] WILLIAM: Ok. But then the next time, the workers were there again, the Third World. Then the third time you joined the group, or was it the second time you joined the group?

[00:36:41] LARRY: I joined the second time we were down there.

[00:36:43] WILLIAM: Okay. And the third time other community activists joined the group?

[00:36:47] LARRY: Right.

[00:36:48] WILLIAM: And then the third time you didn't get a chance to shut it down?



[00:36:52] LARRY: No. And certain people went to jail. The police came, they said [inaudible] and they called in the police. So after the first demonstration in December, when they closed it down and they decided to try and negotiate again and get some action. So between the middle of December and the end of January there wasn't any demonstrations, because they began to negotiate, and National said, "We weren't aware of the criticalness of the problem, we want to call in AGC, we want to call in Local—whatever the local is for operating engineers—and see if we can't resolve this problem." And again, minority workers decided, despite the experience of '72 and '69, to negotiate with them in good faith. They just wanted some agreement wherein they could be guaranteed an opportunity to get a job.

So they negotiated, and the agreement they thought was, by the end of January, to hire a minority coordinator for the operating engineering trainee program. And that UCWA would have, along with the local of operating engineers, collectively, along with members of the Court Order Advisory Council and members of EEOC, would determine who this minority coordinator would be. And this was their understanding from going to the meetings. Unfortunately, these agreements were all verbal, they weren't actually written—Well, yeah wait a minute. They were written down in one document, that UCWA should have some input in determining who the minority coordinator is.

What happened at the end of January is that the local hired a coordinator, out of complete bad faith. It was an insult, because they not only hired a coordinator, they told the minorities that he was a Third World person, of Spanish descent. They said his grandfather came from Spain, therefore he was of Spanish descent. They tried to imply that he was Chicano, this was a white guy that they hired who had no sensitivity whatsoever toward Third World people, or knowledge about their experience. But the main thing is that he was hired without the input of the UCWA Operating Engineers Committee, who had been promised that they'd have some input. And they said, "This is a complete show of lack of faith, and we have no choice but to hit the streets again."

So in the middle of February, they decided—and I went to some of the meetings during that time—they decided to spend some time mobilizing forces. And around February 12 they decided to hit the streets again, without warning, go back to National and close them down. I think the first day we went down there, we caught them completely by surprise, and they did indeed close it down. This was the second time that people had gone out there. Then the next morning, I think it was February 12 or something like that, we went back out there. I guess it was about twenty or thirty of us, yeah, all Third World workers, I mean, all Third World people, maybe ten of the thirty were operating engineers. And we tried to close down, they said they wouldn't close, they called the police, we were given a couple of minutes to leave. We began to leave and were arrested, many of us were arrested. I wasn't, but many of the people were arrested, about twelve or thirteen people were arrested.

Then the next morning, after those brothers were arrested, we put it out all over Seattle, on [?Kiro?] and everything, that they were arresting brothers, the issues was jobs as operating engineers, they have thirty down on Rainier and none of them are minority, and we tried to negotiate with them in good faith and they didn't accept it, they cut out throats, and we want community people to come out and help us. As a result of that call, a lot of progressive white people came out to the next morning's demonstration. Tyree and several other brothers were in jail. But the second morning, we had about sixty, sixty-five people come out at about 6:30 in the morning, and it was pretty well mixed between whites, Asians, Chicanos, and Blacks. And again, we decided to try to close it down but we would do it guerilla action, guerilla-like. That is, we'd go in front of the gate, and when the police came, we'd leave; we'd go down on Rainier, we'd try to surround the men who were working, not allow them to work; when the police came, we'd split, go further down Rainier and do the same thing.

When we got to our third site, to our surprise, the police gave no warning and came in and arrested all of us. That was the morning of February 13, that I think fifty-five people were arrested, all of us. And that time a whole lot of people who had never been in jail got busted, and we were taken down. I think that was on a Wednesday, or something. Then the next morning, people started—we had to start dealing with the court thing again, and we had to figure out a strategy. So we decided not to have any demonstration, just to deal with the court strategy and figure out how we can really close these people down. People were determined to close them down.

So it was planned to have—wait till the following morning, Monday, and try and get as many people as possible and just close it down by any means necessary. And what happened that Monday, they met at Powell Barnett Park, and about two hundred to two hundred fifty people came, and they marched all the way down to Rainier, confronted the pigs, saying, “Close it down.” And I guess the cat at National got kind of scared, and he closed it down for that day and said, “Well let’s sit down.”

They decided to sit down, workers to workers. They got a few of the white construction workers to sit down, because by that time UCWA had developed a pretty good class analysis of what was happening. They said, “The white workers aren’t our enemy, although the white workers conceive us to be the enemy, and therefore try to deny us the opportunity. We don’t perceive them as the enemy, we perceive the contractors as our enemy, the union bureaucrats as our enemy, and the capitalist economic system as our main enemy, not white workers, and we should spend some time educating them.” So they spent a lot of time rapping with the white workers, and about six of them agreed to meet with them. So they thought, maybe we can come to some kind of unity with the white workers, and we should attempt to do that. So they closed it down, there was a victory, or else all of those people would’ve gone to jail, or it would’ve been a lot of heads busted. They was gonna fight, people was gonna fight, the determination was really...and the spirit was great.

So they decided to sit down with the white workers, not the union bureaucrats, not the contractors, not the government affirmative action agents, but the white workers. And they were kind of excited about that, the Operating Engineering Committee and the UCWA administration. And they had a couple of meetings with them, and they weren’t really that fruitful. The white workers got—some of them kind of learned some things from it, but somehow they must have went back to have some beer with their friends, and their friends said, “Why are you meeting with those Communists?” All of a sudden, they decided that they weren’t coming to any more meetings.

So those meetings broke down. But the committee and UCWA decided not to go back out in the street—well, we did go back out. They called a “Jobs for All” demonstration downtown, again 150 people came, and we said, “We just want to spend some time, we don’t want nobody else busted. We got all these trials now to deal with—let’s just dramatize the plight of not only the Third World workers, but all workers.” And we came up with this big general—and what we and our analysis now feel is a very vague demand, “Jobs for All,” and we tried to push for that, passing out thousands of leaflets downtown, picket signs and everything, we did. And we had a big demonstration.

As a result of that demonstration, we began to reevaluate all the things, UCWA began to reevaluate all the things that it had been doing. Some of the operating engineers got some jobs, we had to spend about two months after that in the courts. They committed and worked all the way through that, but that’s led to a whole reorientation in UCWA now. They feel that they’ve gotten a little alienated from the workers, the rank and file workers, Black workers in particular. And they decided to go back and spend some time cultivating their development with them. They felt the ideas that were being put forth by UCWA leadership and operating

engineers leadership and the staff was too advanced for the rank and file; the rank and file didn't understand and didn't identify, and they couldn't possibly be that successful without the support of the rank and file, so they decided to go back and start where the rank and file are and and try to develop their consciousness and understanding step by step, and hopefully the next time that something dramatically has to be done that they have very deep-rooted support and understanding from the workers.